

Q R V ?



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Training and News for the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

ACS Participates in Audible Warning Drill

A View from the EOC

By Alex Berteau, KG6JPJ

On Saturday, the 15th of October, at 0830 hours, members of Seattle's Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) gathered in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to assist Seattle's Emergency Management Department with their test of the initial phase of the AWS – Audible Warning System – which was to begin at 1000 hours. There was lots of coffee, which is good on an early Saturday call out, and there were doughnuts, which is even better (calories get burned off quickly during emergency ops).

Our indomitable chief, Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, welcomed everyone and gave a rundown of the day's activities. The City

of Seattle had partially deployed the AWS in three locations along the Seattle waterfront: a north location near Myrtle Edwards Park; a central position by the waterfront fire station; and a southern site near the cruise ship terminal at Pier 30. He described the purpose of the AWS as two-fold: first, to give warning to people, by alert tone and spoken message, that there was some kind of emergency requiring their attention; and secondly, to tell them where to go.

The plan was for ACS members to be staged along the waterfront, and in some buildings nearby, to help assess the effectiveness of the AWS by recording the volume, clarity, and

intelligibility of 'Westminster' chimes and recorded messages spoken by both male and female voices. Mark handed out sheets which asked for several different observations on a 1 to 10 scale. ACS personnel were also asked to survey passersby, if they were amenable, to solicit information on their opinion of the test. The AWS would be activated in three separate phases, and immediately afterward, three nets would be established, one for each 'zone', to relay reported information back to net controllers at the EOC.

Steve Martin, a strategic advisor for emergency operations and plans for Seattle Emergency

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QRV?



QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service, City of Seattle, Emergency Management

Seattle ACS Nets

General net: meets weekly on Mondays at 7:00 p.m.—Bill Ehler K7NZV Net Manager
 Training/Technical net: meets weekly on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.—George Boswell K7YHB Net Manager
 146.96 MHz PSRG repeater/-600 KHz offset/103.5 tone

Seattle ACS Frequency Plan

Program your radios so they always transmit the indicated tone. We rely on this for automatic access to supporting systems.

Check-in & Event Coordination Frequency

146.96 MHz repeater/-600 KHz offset/103.5 tone

*In case of repeater failure use 146.96 simplex with 103.5 tone. You will be assigned an operating frequency for passing traffic.
 We want to keep the check-in and coordination frequency as clear as possible.*

Operating frequencies

These frequencies are to be used for passing message traffic between field posts and the Seattle EOC.

UHF repeaters: Primary System

443.650 MHz ACS-North repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Northeast and Northwest zones
443.000 MHz ACS-Central repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Central East and Central West zones
441.800 MHz ACS-South repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Southeast and Southwest zones

VHF Simplex: Backup System

*ACS operates a north and south remote base that receives and transmits on our two designated simplex frequencies.
 Tones are mandatory.*

146.56 MHz ACS-VHF North. Simplex. Tone 103.5 Hz (Xmt and Rcv)

Planned service area: Northwest, Northeast, and Central-East zones

147.58 MHz ACS-VHF South. Simplex. Tone 103.5 Hz (Xmt and Rcv)

Planned service area: Southwest, Southeast, and Central-West zones

Six Meter Repeater – used for special operations – 53.250 MHz tone 100 Hz.

State & County Nets

Washington State Emergency meets Mondays at 5:30 p.m. Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. 3.985 MHz
 King County ARES meets Sundays at 8:00 p.m. 146.82 MHz (tone 103.5)

Please direct inquiries about the Auxiliary Communication Service to:

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Please direct letters, articles, and inquiries about **QRV?** to the editor:

Peter Smith N7BYP (206) 284-2098, n7byp@arrl.net

ACS Website: www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs

From the Editor

Momentum

I'm sure you've noticed it too. Much is happening in our organization, we're on the move and picking up momentum. One unmistakable sign of this can be seen in the number of new ACS members. The other day I was net control for our Monday evening net after having been away for a few weeks. I was pleasantly surprised by all of the calls I didn't recognize right away. It's great to hear our new members check in. Welcome to you all!

Then there's the Saturday morning training net. Thanks to George Boswell, K7YHB, and others who have made this net a reality we have another helpful way to stay in practice. If you haven't already done so, check into this Saturday morning net and, as a special bonus, pick up some tips and other helpful technical information about your radio.

Have you attended our recently initiated monthly training meetings yet? If not, you're missing out on a fine opportunity to learn more about the tools and procedures we use as effective communicators. Our last meeting, for example, featured an interesting and helpful presentation and discussion about survival. We became more knowledgeable about essential tools and techniques we'll surely need when we de-

ACS Initiates Monthly Training Meetings

By
Peter Smith, N7BYP

First Meeting—9/28/2005

On September 28, 2005 the first in a series of regular training meetings was held at the Seattle EOC. Approximately 30 people attended this meeting. After introductions of those present, Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, shared insights concerning lessons learned from the recent severe hurricanes experienced on the gulf coast. The need for clear and effective evacuation policies and procedures, the value of strengthened and redundant communication systems, the effectiveness of the Salvation Army's SATURN radio

network, and the importance of home preparedness were discussed.

A revised ACS message form was distributed and explained. Existing SDART and ACS message forms were redesigned to bring them into alignment with each other. In particular, the "ACS Reporting Information" section of the form is in draft form and suggestions were encouraged. You may send them directly to Mark Sheppard.

Jim Doub, K6TKU, explained new training procedures as outlined in the Seattle ACS Management System Overview. Ten proposed ACS positions were described along with basic knowledge content and skills associated with those positions. A matrix showing the proposed ACS positions along with required and optional training re-

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Photo by Pete Smith N7BYP

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Jim Doub K6TKU Presents Training Schedule

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Management, thanked ACS members in advance for their participation in the test, and introduced Rick Lindsay, an Emergency Preparedness Officer from the Seattle Police Department, and Cornell Amaya, an Emergency Management Public Information Officer (PIO). The three of them would be driving the vans to ferry ACS members out to the test areas.

I was stationed in the EOC for the drill, and tasked as net control for the 'South Net'. 'North Net' was run by Bill Dockstader, W7LSK, and Joel Ware, KD7QKK, operated 'Central Net' on the primary drill frequency, 443.000 MHz. After the vans departed, the EOC became relatively quiet as the system technicians got preparations underway for the test. On one of the overhead monitors at the north end of the radio 'bullpen', we could see images of a closed-off Alaskan Way Viaduct and an intersection where the City of Seattle was running another emergency drill, of which the AWS test was a component. At 0950 hours, Joel gave a ten minute warning to ACS members, and had each zone switch to their individual drill frequencies for a roster check. Then everyone was directed to switch back to the primary drill channel.

At approximately 1005 hours, the 'Central' component of the AWS was activated via computer at the EOC, followed shortly afterward by the other

two zones. ACS members were then instructed to switch to their respective nets to transmit their reports.

We EOC net controllers queried ACS communicators on our zone rosters, using tactical call signs such as 'Sierra One' to indicate communicator S-1 on the southern net. Some individuals were unable to transmit due to equipment problems, and had others in their section relay their reports. Other ACS per-

ACS is a critical component of any emergency communications planning.

sonnel were unable to reach the EOC on their assigned frequencies, and resourcefully switched to a different net to get their data to another net control.

At about 1100 hours, everyone had returned by van to the EOC for a debriefing on the AWS test's effectiveness, and Mark noted some interesting results. About 20 observers heard the 'Westminster' alert chime, but only 5-6 hands were raised when asked whether they had heard the male and female voices speaking. The consensus seemed to be that the AWS was quite audible close to the sites, but faded quickly with distance. Some members noted that ambi-

ent construction or traffic noise prevented them from hearing the warning sounds. George Boswell, K7YHB, observed that the deployment of ACS members worked well, and we managed to get everyone back who had gone out into the field.

At the conclusion of the drill, Steve Martin again thanked ACS members for their participation and remarked that the ravages of Hurricane Katrina had reinforced for him that ACS is a critical component of any emergency communications planning. In addition, he noted that the new EOC will have a lot more room for ACS, and said he considers our group an integral part of the Emergency Management Department.

All told, I thought the AWS drill to be an excellent test of ACS capabilities in the field, as well as a great opportunity to help the City of Seattle and have fun in the process.

Amber Alerts

The Washington State Patrol invites you to subscribe to Amber Alert Messages. Members of the amateur radio services are encouraged to subscribe. Because of their awareness, equipment, and training, hams are good candidates to receive Amber Alert messages. To subscribe visit:

www.washingtonameralert.com
(above material quoted from from WSP brochure. -ed)

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quirements was discussed. As the training program evolves it is hoped that member strengths will be identified as well as those areas requiring additional training. Other emergency communications organizations will be surveyed to bring their best practices into our training program.

Second Meeting—10/26/2005

The second in the new series of ACS training meetings was held on at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 26, 2005, at the Seattle Public Utilities Operations Control Center. The theme of the meeting was “Emergency Preparedness: Are You Ready?”

After a welcome, ACS Man-

ager Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, introduced John Pirak of Seattle Emergency Management who described possible disaster scenarios. Mr. Pirak noted that Seattle’s geographical situation and the fact that many buildings were constructed prior to earthquake codes require that we be in a high state of preparedness.

Alex Berteau, KB6JTJ, introduced Richard Nelson from REI. Mr. Nelson and his assistant presented helpful information concerning survival success, particularly as it deals with rapidly changing environments. He described the following steps as essential for dealing with stressful survival situations: (1) stop and assess the situation, (2) take charge of your survival, (3) commit to a survival plan, (4) pay attention

to your surroundings, (5) look for assets and opportunities, and (5) take action. He also noted the importance of developing a family disaster plan. A variety of potentially useful tools and materials for disaster preparedness was shown.

A revised draft for ACS go kits was distributed and discussed. Feedback from members was invited. Further revisions will be forthcoming. The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 p.m. — — — — —

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ploy for the “real thing.”

I could continue with more examples and describe new schedules for training, new moves toward standardizing our go kits, and online training opportunities that have been identified and/or developed by our training officer Jim Doub, K6TKU, and those who have assisted him, but I think by now you get the idea

ACS is picking up momentum and moving in a positive direction, one that will lead to a more professional, effective auxiliary communications service. I can’t think of a better time to become more involved. Check into nets or better yet, volunteer to be net control. Interact with your friends and colleagues at meetings. Complete the online training programs. Let’s keep the momentum going! — — — — —



Photo by Pete Smith N7BYP

Alex Berteau KB6JTJ Introduces Survival Presentation

ACS Represented at “Are You Ready” Exposition at Seattle Center

The “Are You Ready?” exposition and fair, sponsored by the King County Office of Emergency Management and the *Seattle Times* was held on October 21st and 22nd at the Seattle Center Exposition Hall. Families and businesses were welcome to the no charge emergency preparedness event. ACS had a booth at the fair manned by George Boswell, K7YHB, and Bill Dockstader, W7LSK. -----



Photo by Jim Hicks K7BDL

Bill Dockstader, W7LSK, Bruce Miller, KC7IAY, and
George Boswell, K7YHB, at the ACS booth

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